Iconography and identity – the appropriation of crab-claw sails in Oceania.

Abstract

Art, photography and graphic images of Oceanic sails are scattered across the last four hundred years of visual history in Oceania. The crab-claw or inverted triangular shaped sail, initially depicted in ethnographic and technical drawings, historical tableaux, etchings, photographs, postcards and illustrated books and magazines, took on a new meaning in western imaging when stamps, letterheads, logo and advertisements displaced earlier methods of representing Oceania. The soaring sail, often shown detached from the double-hulled canoe or outrigger, lost its association with long-distance voyaging when stylized, graphic art and computer-generated sail images began to play a symbolic role and national entities, movements, organizations and institutions sought to assert Oceanic identities, cultural unity and political relationships. What began as a visual record of maritime achievement became an evolving iconography of appropriation and commodification serving a range of sovereignty, political and regional campaigns.

The distinctive, inverted sail in Oceania, catalogued according to regional differences as crab-claw, lateen, boomsprit, spritsail or two-boom triangular sail[1] became an icon and artistic and commercial commodity in Oceania as its striking and simple form was appropriated in a sequence of differing iconographic uses.[2] In these appropriations the sail lost its ethnographic connection to actual long distance voyaging, canoe construction, navigation and associated maritime cultural practices. The visual transition from early twentieth century ethnographic photographs of canoes under sail to a stylized twenty-first century icon is exemplified by the graphic rendering of a crab-claw sail, often detached from its double-hulled or outrigger canoe, as the central motif in the logo of the Northern Marianas College, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the 2000 Festival of Pacific Arts, the 2000 Pacific Peoples Partnership conference, the Outrigger Hotel chain, *Province Sud* (Southern Province) in New Caledonia, the 2000 Pacific Festival of Arts, the 2003 Fiji Wesleyan Conference, the Pacific Islands Political Studies Association and the *Sociétés d'Études Mélanésiennes.* Artistic representations of sails appear on the flag of French Polynesia, on-line home pages, advertisements for banks, book publishers, Fiji coffee, newspapers and the covers of monographs, annual reports, conference papers and national and regional surveys.

As a regional symbol for Oceania a sail had geographic authority as the form of a canoe, usually a great canoe from the mythological migrations, was found both historically in Oceanic art and as Meyer noted (1995, 448) in "some form or another throughout the different cultures of the South Pacific". It could be traced visually in Euro-American publishing from the earliest European expeditions into Oceania and had mythological, historical and contemporary authority and continued in the children who played with toy outriggers made from pandanus, sennit, tin cans and packaging material in the lagoons of Tonga, Kiribati, Chuuk and across the region.

The following chronological survey demonstrates how the crab-claw sail changed from being the subject of scientific, artistic and photographic recording through to commodification as a lift button for the Outrigger/Ohana hotel chain in Hawaii. It demonstrates how the crab-claw sail became detached graphically from the double-hulled and outrigger canoe at the same time as it lost its connection to voyaging and became a regional activist, institutional and consumer icon. As the crab-claw shape is widely used stylistically as a symbol or logo, I have chosen for convenience of argument to use "crab-claw sail" in the text to refer generically to the variety of sails used in Oceania.

The crab-sail had become what Jocelyn Linnekin called "identity merchandise" (Linnekin 1997, 216) representing "cultural groups by means of graphic paragons, archetypes and key symbols". The variety of use extended from a colonial stamp in 1901 through to a poster for the 1984 Festival of Pacific Arts depicting eight different sails used on New Caledonian *pirogue* (canoe). Many stamps across Oceania featured sailing canoes including a commemorative set in French Polynesia in 1976 on the canoes of the Marquesas (25 franc), Raiatea (30 franc), Tahiti (75 franc) and Tumamotu (100 franc).[3] Sailing canoes appeared on a c1950s Bank of Samoa five pound note depicting a Samoan *fa'atoia* (double-hulled canoe). With the artist's original drawing a note was displayed in 2002 in a bank foyer in Apia. A free tourist newspaper in Vanuatu allocated a whole page to the revival of traditional canoes and use extended to the electronic media when Radio Australia's *Charting the Pacific* web site devoted a program in 2002 to "The genius of Marshall Island canoe makers". At the Musée de l'Homme in Paris a sewn Tuamotu canoe (collected in 1934-36) was put on display in 2000 while an outrigger with thatched sails was highlighted at the newly opened National Museum of Australia's *Paipa* or windward exhibition space on Torres Strait Island history

In the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries the technical drawing of canoes, sails, outriggers and rigging by draughtsmen and artists on Euro-American expeditions covered most of Oceania and acknowledged a remarkable history of maritime achievement, expertise, exploration and settlement. In the late 19th century the medium changed and photography offered a new level of access, knowledge and accuracy. The next change was a turn away from ethnography to symbolic and commercial uses, typified in 1901 by the use of a drawing of a Papuan crab-claw sail and *lakatoi* (a double-hulled canoe with one or two crab-claw sails) for the colonial stamp released in British New Guinea. The crab-claw sail progressed through several representations and media in the twentieth century before appearing as a computer graphic, logo and elevator button. Divorced from reality and representational, commodified and symbolic, it appeared on posters, brochures for television documentaries, anti-nuclear testing campaign literature, murals, museum displays and randomly across magazines and books as incidental and supplementary illustration.

Stylized representations and actual images of crab-claw sails had become ubiquitous but whom did they represent and what did audiences read in their striking symbolism? Epeli Hau'ofa (1993) examined the mechanisms for naming and signifying Oceania and claimed Oceanic art forms transcended national and cultural diversities but he overlooked the visual power of the canoe and sail in graphic representations, icons and photographic images. The crab-claw sail has indeed transcended regional difference. In the late Nineteenth century a crab-claw sail photograph recorded a

specific ethnographic reality but a hundred years later for a completely different set of reasons and motivations a crab-claw sail was assumed by non-Oceania and Oceania audiences to be symbolic of an all-encompassing Oceanic culture.

The importance of symbolism was noted in a study of the iconography of the Zaire artist and historian Tshibumba. Fabian (1996, 269 and 297) noted that History offered truth, reality and a socially shared reality or praxis, but then posed a question - what delimits, shapes and structures such a praxis? Fabian suggested that reality or realities were interpreted through behavior and action mediated by signs and symbols. In Oceania these signs and symbols included artistic and then later photographic images of voyaging canoes. In the twentieth century, in the same process of recognition and mediation that previously stereotyped the region through images of costumed dancers, partially-clothed women, young men climbing palm trees, *moko*, *lei, tapa*, *tiki* or tattooed bodies, the photograph and artistic interpretation of the crab-claw sail served the same mediating role. This role was played in Hawaii by the chant, *hula* and ukulele. Buck (1993, 179-80) noted they served as an appropriated "succession of mythological representations of reality"[4] but she overlooked the authority of visual material and in particular the proliferation of images of the double-hulled Hawaiian voyaging canoe *Hokule'a* and subsequent reconstructions as well as the related navigation, watercraft and voyaging revival. The crab-claw sail was only one of several Hawaiian signifiers but by the late twentieth century it had assumed popular iconic acknowledgement across Oceania as a signifier for the region and was providing a convenient cliché for Euro-American audiences perplexed by the diversity of Oceania.

Navigator, scholar and inspiration for several voyaging projects, Ben Finney (1994, 71, 307 and 309) argued in a variety of publications and speeches there had been a need in Oceania to "consciously seek to recreate and elaborate ancestral ways for contemporary purposes". Finney cited the welcome speeches on *Hokule'a's* return voyage from New Zealand in 1985, noting how "speaker after speaker stressed how this voyage had made all Hawaiians, indeed all Polynesians, proud of their seafaring heritage, giving them strength to face the challenges of the modern world". (Finney 1994, 71, 307 and 309) Oceanic art historian and anthropologist Philip Dark claimed a similar role of reinforcement and cultural revival for the 1980-81 construction of the *Binabina* in the Solomon Islands. (Dark 1990, 246) and in the popular magazine market in 2003, *Geo* highlighted the link between navigation voyaging and revival of identity. (Sivadjian 2003, 56-65) Tommy Holmes, (1981/rev 1993, 193) waterman and crew member on the *Hokule'a,* declared "the canoe, once the most important artifact in Hawaiian and all Oceanic cultures has returned".

The connectedness and inspiration derived from ancestral navigations was noted by anthropologist Margaret Jolly. (2001, 420-21) She emphasized the benefit of "not only a sense of pride in the ancients of Oceania but celebration in the lives of contemporary Pacific Islanders" and in 2003, historian Kerry Howe (Howe 2003, 114) summed up the nexus between voyaging and cultural revival in Euro-American and Oceanic literature by noting the *Hokule'a* had become a "modern cultural icon for a generation of indigenous Hawaiians asserting their identity. Such feeling extends beyond Hawaii and is often expressed in pan-Polynesian sentiment". My aim here is to interrogate the iconographic use of the crab-claw sail by mapping the evolution of photographic and other images through a century of use, representation and meaning.

This iconography[5] is situated against colonial, academic, political, artistic, commercial and cultural enterprises that promoted a single image in the public domain as symbolic of common cultural practice, indigenous assertiveness and a unified region - Oceania.

The ethnographic phase

Typical of the early European artistic attempts were the simplistic but technically accurate double-hulled Tongan *tongiaki* drawn in Abel Tasman's log-book during his voyage of 1642-43 and Robert Benard's coloured engraving of a "*Pirogues des isles des Amis*" c1780, both consistently used as book illustrations through to the present time.[6] Later, by blending ethnographic and picturesque elements in their drawings and tableaux pieces, the early Euro-American voyage artists called for an appreciation of Oceania's ancient and continuing maritime societies. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the camera had replaced the artist as the medium for recording, and represenetation.

Photography became a popular pastime and the prolific photographic output of explorers, administrators, missionaries and visiting scientists soon appeared in illustrated magazines and newspapers, serial encyclopedia, stereographs, lanternslides, mission fund raising exhibitions and paraphernalia, as frontispieces and full-page illustrations in fiction and non-fiction books and increasingly in the rapidly expanding postcard boom at the turn of the century. These black and white images were assumed to possess truth and immediacy and for distant readers were an unfettered, convenient and accessible body of knowledge. The crab-claw sail was popular with authors, editors and publishers because it contrasted with the square canvas and mast of European ships and suggested links to primitive technologies, tribal cultural practices and maritime lifestyles. It also offered dramatic compositional opportunities for pictorial and aesthetic image making. When British administrators in Papua selected the crab-claw sail and *lakatoi* for their first stamp, it identified Papua as a colonial possession with an allegedly homogenous primitive culture in the last of the world's so-called wild places. This was a contested image as several other subjects could have been chosen – a tattooed body, a Koiari tree house, Gulf *dobu* (long house) or a littoral pile-village such as Hanuabada or Elavala. The British New Guinea crab-claw stamp remained in circulation for thirty years.

Elsewhere in Oceania, double-hulled and outrigger canoe with graphic crab-claw sails were appearing as postcards and commercially available prints. In 1900-1930, one in twenty of all postcards of Fiji featured canoes and a famous large Samoan *'alia* (double-hulled voyaging canoe) photographed by AJ Tattersall and constructed as a gift for the German *Kaiser* at the turn of the century, and subsequently left to rot on a Samoan beach, featured consistently in magazine articles, books, reports and encyclopedia about Samoa. In 1921, Frank Hurley photographed an *orou* (a Mailu double-hulled voyaging canoe) on the Papuan coast and noted the Mailu were "great traders and sailors", (Specht and Fields 1984, 42) and in 1934, Hugo Bernatsik (Bernatsik, 1934, 66-73, 81 and 121-25) included a full-page plate of a Mailu Island *orou* or claw-sail double canoe in his travel book, *Südsee,* and described an exhilarating passage across 400 kilometres of open sea. Bernatsik included nine amazing photographs of the crew bailing, steering and trimming the sails while reaching in strong winds.[7]

It was convenient for publishers but misleading to re-publish thirty and fifty year old photographs of canoes. Crab-claw sail photographs from Papua continued to be published through to the 1940s but were usually recycled from an earlier era. For example, the *orou* photograph taken by Hurley at Mailu in 1921 appeared fourteen years later on the cover of the Australian illustrated geographic magazine *Walkabout* (August 1935) and nineteen years later as a frontispiece for a German book *Wunderwelt der Sudsee* (Berger, 1940). The *'alia* built for the Kaiser appeared in Kramer's *The Samoan Islands* in 1902, the *Cyclopedia of Samoa* in 1907 and then twenty years later in the serial encyclopedia *Peoples of all nations* in 1926. A photograph by JW Lindt taken in 1884 and published that year in his *Picturesque New Guinea* reappeared twenty-four years later in GC Martin's *The New Guinea Mission.* HJP Murray recycled crab-claw sail photographs in both *Papua in British New Guinea* in 1912 and *Papua of today* in 1924. A c1910 photograph of a *lakatoi* by the missionary, WJ Saville, appeared in WP Nairne's *Greatheart of Papua* in 1913 and twenty-three years later in 1926 when Saville's own account, *In Unknown New Guinea,* was published. Presented to audiences with a here-now truth these recycled images from Papua, and across Oceania, suggested an unbroken and enduring maritime tradition and similar to other photographs assuming iconic status, recycled and reprinted long after their taking, had a tendency to suggest inaccurately the continuation of obsolete cultural characteristics.

By the early twentieth century long-distance voyaging had declined across much of Oceania. The *Papuan Courier* lamented in November 1913 that working for wages and ownership of cutters was to blame for "the vanishing *lakatoi*". A visiting Australian, Philippa Bridge (1925, 40), noted in 1923 that *lakatoi* "were not seen often now" and the *Papuan Courier* reported in 1928 that only four *lakatoi* from Hanuabada and three from Elevala had "sailed to the west" during that year's *hiri* season, or annual trading cycle.[8] The introduction of colonial boundaries, local and regional indentured labor markets, imported food, wooden planked cutters and regular inter-island steam shipping had the effect of curtailing voyaging.[9] British colonial authorities in Kiribati banned the construction of new canoes and inter-island voyaging in 1907 because they feared it would promote inter-island jealousies and conflicts (Sabatier 1977, 110 and 362; HE Maude in Siers 1978, 266). In 1900-1930, postcard captions warned purchasers they were buying photographs of the "last of the double war canoes".[10]

Missing from view; 1930-1970

Between 1930 and 1960, illustrations of crab-claw sails and voyaging canoes disappeared from historical accounts, visual presentations and popular iconography. Newsreels and movies replaced the adventurer's lantern slides and illustrated book as the means of knowing about other worlds and two World Wars and a depression dramatically changed the marketing and the economics of publishing profusely illustrated newspapers and magazines. The stereograph disappeared and the postcard and international exhibition declined as a means of learning-by-looking. Events such as Eric de Bisschop's *Kaimiloa* voyage in the 1930s and the Hawaii-Samoa voyage of the ten-metre Hawaiian outrigger *Koa* briefly attracted media interest (de Bisschop 1940; Holmes 1986, 99) and in 1970, Gladwin (1970 39) was able to list seventy-three inter-island Micronesian voyages by canoes from Polowat in 1966-67. In 1972,

there were still eleven big canoes and two more under construction on Polowat and Satawal had nine, Pollap had five and Houk had seven big canoes. (Ridgell et al 1994, 186-91). Gladwin (1970 34) observed the continuing practice of construction, navigation training and voyaging and concluded there was "no sign that this enthusiasm is waning". But elsewhere, Oceanic voyaging was ignored as a cultural characteristic in a new Euro-American literary and visual construction of the "Pacific".[11] The propaganda demands of mining, large scale plantations and colonial administration, and particularly tourism, meant the *hula,* grass skirt, *mai tai* and cruise liner replaced the crab-claw sail as a symbol for Oceania.

Then, an academic debate – without sails

In the 1960s and 1970s a debate took place on the origins of Pacific Island peoples, particularly eastern Polynesians and their initial pattern of settlement. It developed after the voyage of the *Kon Tiki* in 1947 and publications by Andrew Sharp (1957 and 1963), Robert Suggs (1960), Jack Golson (1963), Roger Green (1966) and others. The worldwide sales of Andrew Sharp's *Ancient voyagers in the Pacific,* revised as *Ancient voyagers in Polynesia* in 1963, was particularly influential and inspired opponents to search for still-practicing navigators in Micronesia and to repudiate his accidental-drifting thesis by demonstrating ancient maritime skills and deliberate navigation through reconstruction voyages. In 1966, Ben Finney (1979, 14-16 and 1999, 5-6) began a long personal journey, still unfinished, when he constructed a double-hulled canoe, *Nalehia,* in Santa Barbara, California and later sailed it extensively in the Hawaiian Islands experimenting with sailing techniques and the possibility of long-distance Polynesian voyaging. In *The east is a big bird* in 1970, Gladwin demonstrated that long-distance voyaging traditions were still practiced in the Caroline Islands and David Lewis followed by highlighting Oceanic navigation skills in his 1972 book, *We the navigators*. Based on extensive fieldwork, Gladwin and Lewis recorded ancient and legendary voyages, skills and techniques as well as contemporary inter-island sailing. Their books remain the seminal works on Oceanic sailing. Lewis also published two popular accounts, *From Maui to Cook*, (1977) and *The voyaging stars; secrets of the Pacific Island navigators* (1978). The cover of the 1977 book juxtaposed a crab-claw sail against a three-masted European ship.

Sail settings, hull design, construction and sailing characteristics were crucial to the origins and settlement debate as proponents of competing theoretical positions argued about drift voyages and deliberate settlement, settler motivations, adapted or adopted material cultures, shards, myths, documentary records and dates. The debate generated a ground-breaking computer simulation (Levison Ward and Webb 1973), a brief search for book covers, frontispieces and illustrations and a renewed interest by publishers in the publication of beautifully illustrated volumes of 17th to 19th century European expeditions. However, crab-claw sails faded from view except for a few published appearances as supplementary or incidental illustrations.

Globalisation, land rights and resistance - the cultural revival phase

In the 1980s the Polynesian origins and settlement debate revived in a different context as interest in indigenous knowledge, identity, culture, land rights and resistance became the focus for activists in Oceania. Documentary filmmakers privileged the local over the global and took up voyaging themes as a vehicle for a

wide range of causes. Canoes, navigation and voyaging featured in a series of *Hokule'a* documentaries, (Aoki 1994, 124-5) as well as in *Sacred vessels; Navigating tradition and identity in Micronesia,* Honolulu TV station KHET's *The navigators; Pathfinders of the Pacific,* the Polynesian Cultural Center's *Polynesian odyssey*, Maiden Voyage Productions *Wayfinders; a Pacific odyssey*, Triton Films *Spirits of the voyage* and Pacific Islanders in Communication's *The voyage home; Hawai'iloa's Northwest Journey.* The eleven-part television documentary *Man on the rim* and two videos from the Solomon Islands *The heirs of Lata; a renewal of Polynesian voyaging* and *Vaka Taumako; the first voyage* were further examples of the revived interest in voyaging.

In the 1990s, the origins debate led to the re-publication, in a single volume, of Haddon and Hornell's original 1936-38 three volume *Canoes of Oceania* and Hawaiian navigator Tommy Holmes *The Hawaiian canoe* (1986) was reprinted in a revised edition in 1993. In 1995, the Kamehameha Schools Press reprinted *Hawaiian Canoe-Building Traditions,* (Chun and Burningham 1995) a 1980s textbook designed to lead students towards the study of seafaring and the canoe as a "cultural peak" in Hawaiian and Pacific history. In 1992, Geoffrey Irwin's *The prehistoric exploration and colonisation of the Pacific* revived the origins debate and appeared with a cover photograph, taken in 1973, of a fleet of modern-day *lakatoi* on the beach at Amazon Bay, Papua. An international symposium on canoe building, navigation and voyaging, called *Waka Moana,* was held at the New Zealand National Maritime Museum (Bader and McCurdy 1996) and in 1998, at the annual regional conference for Pacific Island educators, the Hawaiian navigator Nainoa Thompson gave the keynote address on the topic "Voyaging for sustainability".[12] The Bishop Museum's Native Hawaiian Culture and Arts program featured a "Journey by Starlight" celestial navigation tour as part of a larger project that included the construction of the traditional-materials canoe *Hawai'iloa*. The inaugural issue of a new on-line Micronesian journal in 2003, featured a canoe on the home page along with an historical account of Carolinian-Marianas voyaging (Flood 2003) and in Wallis and Futuna, the newspaper *Te Fenua Fo'ou* (July 25 2001) privileged canoe racing with a full front page photograph when reporting on the *'Aho Falani i Uvea, La fête la tête en bas,* an annual cultural and sailing festival.

In Vanuatu, a revival of traditional knowledge and customs had began with the sailing of a fifteen metre canoe to Port Moresby for the 1980 Festival of Pacific Arts (Hickey 2001) and on the famed canoe building Polynesian outlier of Taumako in the Solomon Islands the building of *tepuke* (large outriggers with crab-claw sails) led to the claim that the builders were "heirs to an unbroken chain of experimental knowledge". (George 1998, 40) Similar sentiments were expressed in Majuro when the front page of the *Marshall Island Journal* (May 20 1994) declared a news photograph of several *tipňŏl* (double outrigger canoes) looked "much the same as they did in the past – a credit to knowledge and skill passed on to new generations".

Like ripples in a pond – in the wake of Hokule'a

The event that put sail images back in the public domain was the voyage by the *Hokule'a* to and from the Society Islands in 1976. The twin boomsprit sails of the *Hokule'a* featured in Ben Finney's book of the voyage, *Hokule'a; the way to Tahiti* and in regular reports of the voyage in the *National Geographic, Pacific Islands*

Monthly and other magazines. Thousands of dramatic images of this double-hulled canoe plunging across the Pacific have since appeared. The iconographic power of the *Hokule'a* was so strong that twenty-four years after the voyage a Hawaiian publishing firm, Bess Press, began using a recently built double-hulled canoe on their catalogue to establish a market position as an "Islands" publisher. The canoe depicted had been constructed in response to the groundswell of popular indigenous support after the initial and many subsequent voyages of the *Hokule'a*. Although contested in Hawaii, regionally and globally by other visual, performance and art forms, the crab-claw sail was again prominent, symbolic and immediately recognizable for Euro-American, Oceania and diasporic Oceania audiences.

The Polynesian Voyaging Society founded in 1973 was primarily responsible for the political decision to use an indigenous event to mark the 1776-1976 bicentennial commemoration in the United States of America. In Kiribati in 1976, Jim Siers (1977 and 1978) had already constructed a *baurua* or voyaging canoe called *Taratai* and sailed it 2700 kilometers to Fiji to prove his theory of a Micronesian settlement route into western Polynesia. But it was the Hawaii-Tahiti return voyage of the *Hokule'a* that created a cultural and political impact, as David Lewis noted, like ripples across a pond.[13]

The construction of large canoes in recently independent nations and unfree colonial possessions across the region was revived along with community interest in associated traditional foods, ritual, mythology and language. In other contexts and locations, water sports such as paddling races were revived or given new legitimacy. In Hawaii, a Hawaiian Sailing Canoe Association was formed to promote single-hulled outrigger canoe sailing, a competitive sport revived in 1986 in Kauai and nationally three years later by the inaugural Ho'omana'a race in 1989. In the twenty years after the *Hokule'a,* a number of similar long distance voyages were made. In Hawaii the *Eala, Mo'olele, Mauloa* and *Hawai'iloa* made regular channel crossings and in 1999 a double-hulled Hawaiian canoe, the *Makali'i*, sailed from Hawaii across Micronesia to Guam. The *Hokule'a* subsequently made voyages to Tahiti and New Zealand as part of an epic two-year inter-island odyssey, to New Zealand again in 1990, to Rarotonga in 1992 and to Rapa Nui in 1999. To celebrate the Festival of Pacific Arts in 2000, the Cook Island canoe *Te Au O Tonga* and the Maori canoe *Te Aurere* both voyaged to New Caledonia. The *Te Aurere* had previously voyaged to Rarotonga in 1992 and to Raiatea, French Polynesia in 1995 where it met up with six canoes from Hawaii and the Cook Islands before sailing on to a canoe festival in Hawaii. In Tonga, three *kalia* were constructed to coincide with the new millennium. The *Mileniume*, at 35 metres in length, and the smaller canoes *Toloa* and '*Atele* were built by Tui'one Pulotoa, a Tongan master carver who had researched traditional canoe designs and been involved in canoe building in Hawaii.[14] The subject of intense local interest, these canoes entered the public consciousness across Oceania and beyond.[15]

The impetus continued in Hawaii in 1988 with the opening of the Honolulu Maritime Centre, the holding of the first "Pacific Canoe" conference and the publication of curriculum materials on voyaging for schools. Museums across the Pacific started to highlight voyaging traditions in their displays and voyaging attracted a new symbolism drawing on indigenous wisdom and knowledge, land rights and cultural revival. Vanuatu's Cultural Center devoted a third of its floor space to canoes and the

new Museum of Victoria, in Melbourne, Australia, displayed seven full scale, seven model canoes and three huge crab-claw sails in a permanent display celebrating the "seafaring cultures from this vast region". Display, museums, politics and cultural renaissance become entwined in new and complex relationships. A Marshall Island voyaging canoe from Enewetak, housed in the National Maritime Museum in Wellington for five years after it participated in the 1992 Rarotonga festival, eventually returned home, re-focusing attention on traditional voyaging and leading to a museum project "Canoes of the Marshall Islands" and an annual "Outrigger Marshall Islands Cup". Canoe racing was occurring at weekends in South Tarawa, Kiribati or to coincide with annual events such as the Kamora Arts Festival at Timika (West Papua), the Marquesas Festival or the Territorial Celebrations on Wallis and Futuna. Other watercraft and sports also developed a higher profile. In the Solomon Islands a Gela war canoe, the *BibaBina* was built, a revival of *tepuke* building occurred on Taumako and in the Western Province a "Festival of the Sea" was held being each December. In Tahiti, the Hawaiki Nui Outrigger Canoe Race was held annually in December and the annual Te Aito Canoe Race began in 1990.[16]

A political agenda

The theme chosen for the Rarotonga Festival of Pacific Arts indicated the politicization of voyaging that was occurring in the 1990s. The theme, "Seafaring Pacific Islanders" or *vaka*, meant both tribe and canoe and proclaimed a message of voyaging, occupation and settlement, enunciated as a rebuttal of continuing Euro-American histories of colonialism and globalisation in the Pacific. Jonassen (1995, 66) called the canoe theme a political statement, appealing for unity on a local and regional level. The seven canoes built in the Cook Islands, the *Uritaua* and *Takitumu* from Rarotonga, *Te-Rangi-Ma-Toru* from Mangaia, *Enua Manu* from Atiu, *Maire Nui* from Ma'uke, *Te Roto Nui* from Mitiaro and *Ngapuariki* from Aitutaki, as well as festival canoes from other Pacific nations, were conceived amid local jealousies, personal, family and district squabbles and national budget problems but during the festival these issues were ignored as the canoes became a regional and international statement of cultural strength and common purpose. A smaller version of the *Takitumu* was constructed later for a voyaging canoe celebration in Hawaii in 1996. At the Festival there was considerable excitement about a double-hulled war canoe replicated merely on the basis of a Sidney Parkinson painting made during James Cook's first Pacific voyage in 1769-70. The physical presence of the sixteen voyaging canoes dramatically demonstrated the revival that was underway.

The effort to construct and later sail canoes to Rarotonga, in Jonassen's opinion, (1995, 73) constituted a wider "political assertion of distinctiveness and achievement". Three years later, seven double-hulled canoes from Tahiti, New Zealand, Tonga, Hawaii and the Cook Islands converged on Ra'iātea in French Polynesia before sailing on to Hawaii, in Ben Finney's words "to celebrate the revival of canoe voyaging that had been developing over the previous two decades". (Finney 1999, 5) These two campaigns - proclaiming Oceanic identity and unity and the revival of voyaging - merged visually in the process of making the crab-claw sail a motif for regional and cultural assertiveness. Beyond Oceania, in Copenhagen, but linking Scandinavia, New Zealand and Polynesia, the "Sti-over-Havet" project planned to construct a twenty-one-metre replica of a double-hulled Tongan *tongiaki* to be known as *Ara-Moana.* These institutional and community projects, the crab-claw

logo, the recycling of old photographs, museum displays and weekend canoe racing acknowledged Oceanic voyaging traditions but were primarily concerned with promoting cultural revival, indigenous rights and acknowledgement of Oceania as a region of new, assertive microstates and living cultures.

The crab-claw had become a symbol for Oceania positioned against global and colonizing influences. This was evident in the Cook Islands with the building of the *Vaka Ki Muroroa* and a planned voyage into the French nuclear testing zone.[17] This was a conscious decision by Cook Islands strategists to use an internationally recognizable and Oceanic cultural motif for propaganda. The *Vaka Ki Muroroa* was a double-edged sword recognizable by the West as representing Oceania (with historical truth and ethnographic accuracy embedded) while for Cook Islanders, the canoe was a rallying point and an actual cultural reality. Cook Islanders promoted the voyaging canoe physically in terms of trees, bindings, pandanus and sennit, and for its technological achievement, but also asked Euro-American audiences to acknowledge it as a political symbol. Canoes were real, but they had international currency by proclaiming the Cook Island's position as an Oceania microstate with a distinctive indigeneity. At the end of the twentieth century for those in Oceania whose link to voyaging had been lost or was only partially remembered, a t-shirt with a sail motif was recognized as a regional symbol and also promoted social memory. A representation could become a reality.

The last of our cultural strongholds

In March 2000, Hawaiian Airlines devoted their in-flight magazine to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Hokule'a*, however, the picture-essays on canoes and voyaging were secondary to an explicit sub-text proclaiming Hawaiian political rights, cultural revival and the awakening of indigenous pride. Readers were told voyaging and canoe construction had become "a powerful symbol of Polynesian renewal, and rediscovering the ancient arts of seafaring had paralleled a similar renaissance in language, dance, poetry, architecture, spirituality, traditional medicine'. (Low 2000, 29). This view, often expressed in the public domain, echoed Finney and Holmes and other participants connected to the *Hokule'a* and voyaging projects beyond Hawaii. The crab-claw sail no longer represented only ancient seafaring. It had been appropriated.

A similar capture is identified in Elizabeth Buck's account of changes in the Hawaiian *hula*. Buck (1993, 183) portrayed the Hawaiian renaissance as a sustained opposition to non-indigenous authority and a defense of Hawaiian culture, environment and lifestyle, claiming the renaissance was "a period of political protest and action and increasing ethnic awareness ... manifested in a resurgence of interest in Hawaiian culture; chant and *hula,* contemporary Hawaiian music, outrigger canoeing, (and) the Pacific voyaging expeditions of the *Hokule'a*".[18] She privileged *hula* as the dominant mechanism by which the Hawaiian renaissance gained expression and cited John W Kēanuenue Ka'imikaua, a *hula* teacher, (Buck 1993, 9) who claimed the *hula* was "the inspiration that will enable the Hawaiians to rise up from the dust of our obscurity. It is the last hope that can make us feel Hawaiian and remember our culture and forefathers. The dance will thus be the last of our cultural strongholds that may well preserve our dying heritage". In Oceania where voyaging traditions continued or were in the process of being revived, nearly identical claims were being made for

voyaging and canoe construction and the crab-claw sail was being increasingly chosen as a visual marker for a variety of campaigns and revival movements.

The "ripple effect" claimed by David Lewis was compromised by some geographical limits. For example, the Oceanic lateen sail chosen as a logo for the Secretariat of the Pacific Community might not resonate with the identity and history acknowledged by contemporary non-maritime communities, despite the common heritage of all Oceanic peoples as sailors and voyagers. This gap was evident at the start of the twentieth century when the Papuan crab-claw sail and *lakatoi* were chosen for a stamp. It re-presented actual annual trading and voyaging, but was probably not recognized or acknowledged in the New Guinea Highlands, Sepik or islands in New Guinea's eastern archipelago. After thirty years as a colonial stamp the crab-claw sail was reprinted several times after independence, and then appeared as the post-independence logo for the Papua New Guinea government's public relations magazine, *Hiri* and on the letter-head of the National Capital District Commission that governed Port Moresby. Four million highland, inland and islands communities gave tacit acknowledgement to the Papua New Guinea State, national symbols and independence icons, but few had sailed in or seen a Mailu *orou* or Motu *lakatoi*. The crab-claw sail was an imposed and hopefully unifying national symbol. In the rest of Oceania, the use of the crab-claw as a symbol also denied the diversity, recent history and geography of non-voyaging and non-maritime communities divorced from cultural practices 2000 years ago.

The imposition of a maritime symbol was to use Margaret Jolly's phrasing, (1992, and Jolly and Thomas 1993) a clash between authentic and inauthentic culture. The citizens of modern nation states in Oceania, for example, may not acknowledge the voyaging heritage asserted by the sail on the logo of the Northern Marianas College or the artistic rendering of a sail on the logo for the 2000 Festival of Pacific Arts. Some college students and festival delegates may have noted the iconic significance and applauded its use as a regional symbol, but others may have rejected or felt marginalized by the identity and unity it imposed. When seeing these ubiquitous, anonymous and generic images, as Nicholas Thomas asks about museum displays, do Oceanic people feel a sense of decay, loss and in-authenticity or a unifying sense of revival and cultural renaissance?[19]

The power of images in a proliferating electronic media, combined with the need to affirm a position in the global arena meant the crab-claw sail was self-consciously promoted across Oceania. The twenty-first century image of a crab-claw sail on a conference folder or company logo is an artifact of contemporary ideologies and political movements as well as of the imagined Pacific of commissioned illustrators, graphic artists and digital image-makers. In and beyond Oceanic, the sail image was expected to promote indigenous cultural revival, land rights, independence, anti-dumping and other decolonizing campaigns. Although crab-claw sail images often accompanied texts unrelated and uninformed by ideology or specific motivation, other uses were deliberate and confrontational and signaled indigenous political action and cultural struggle. This evolving iconography, from the art of the European voyages of the seventeenth century through to twenty-first century political, aesthetic, commercial and cultural uses, was characterized by appropriation, politicization and hopeful calls for unity. The crab-claw sail persisted as a relevant image and icon because it offered dramatic, aesthetic opportunities and had an assumed relevance, but

it also carried divergent, contested and mutable meanings. In 1989, the frontispiece to the book accompanying the documentary series *Man on the rim; the peopling of the Pacific,* (Thorne and Raymond 1989, 6) was a full-page, colour photograph of a small modern outrigger with a spritsail. The caption declared 'the symbol of the Pacific is the outrigger sailing canoe". It still is.

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5938 words

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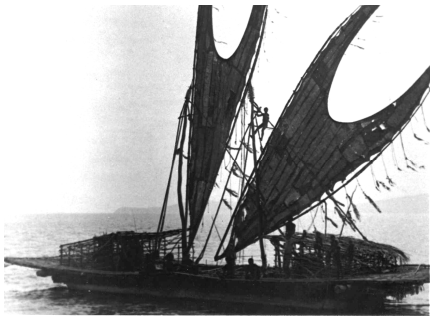
1 

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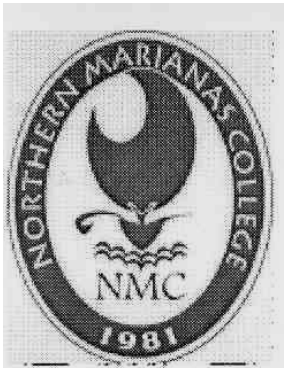
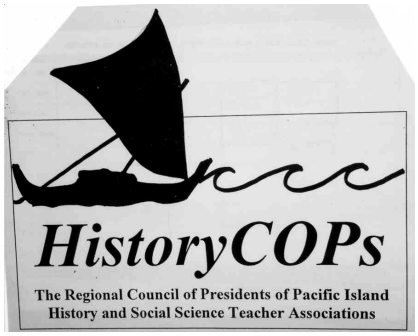
4 

5 
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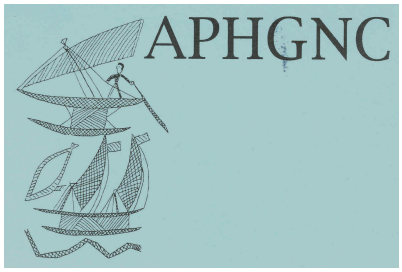
6 
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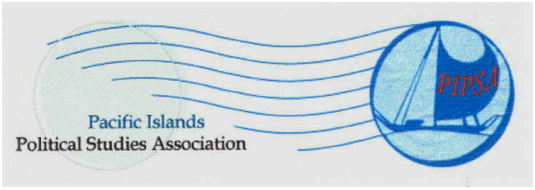
7 
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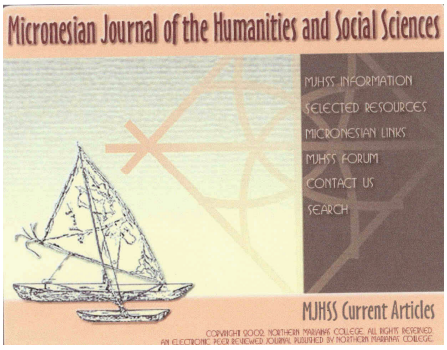
8 
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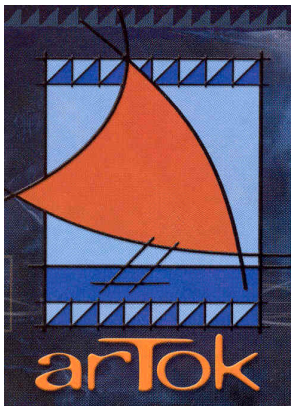
9 
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➢ Patronat : augmentation du SMIG . . . Oui, mais...

Tout le programme du 29 juillet

➢ Calédonie : 15000 personnes attendues au festival de Ko We Kara

14

THE MARSHALL ISLANDS JOURNAL

50¢

Volume 25, Number 20
Friday, May 20, 1994

Boat and passengers given up for lost

Search abandoned

Mary Ann Cordova
Journal Staff

Majuro, May 17 — Despite air and water searches conducted by three nations over more than a week, the rescue operation of a small northern atoll boat and its seven passengers has been abandoned.

According to the Chief Secretary's Office, a 22-foot white and light blue fiberglass boat with four men and three women broke down while making a trip from one island to another within Ebeye atoll. It was subsequently swept through the large boat channel, and the last anyone saw it was Friday, May 6.

Sea Patrol division Andrew Bouman reported that Sea Patrol *Lisiana* patrol boat had arrived in the area the following Monday to begin its search for the boat, and an Air Marshall Islands flight had been diverted for a brief search of the area on Monday.

In addition, the Chief Secretary's Office reported that the United States Coast Guard had conducted an air search and the *Emeraldi II* boat was also searching for the missing vessel. Pohnpei State was also alerted to the situation and asked fishing vessels in the area to look for the boat, according to the Chief Secretary's Office.

The third country to assist in the rescue operation was Australia. Following its brief visit to Majuro, an Australian air force P3C diverted its flight to Pohnpei this past Sunday to search the area, but again, nothing was found, reported Bouman.

By Wednesday, May 11, no boat or floating objects had been spotted and the *Lisiana* was running low on fuel so it headed for Ebeye to refuel then returned to Enewetak to continue its search, said the advisor.

"Rough seas made it difficult for both aircraft and ships to conduct the search," said Bouman.

By Thursday, Sea Patrol got word that the Coast Guard had stopped their search.

Continued on page 4

Pohnpei crime on the rise

Pohnpei Beat
Tom Panholzer
For the Journal

Pohnpei, May 13 — They have had enough and now they have decided to act on their own.

This was the general feeling of residents May 9 in the lasiang area just outside of Kolonia Town in regard to the sudden rise of crime in their neighborhood, also known as Longline Road or Yoste's Road.

Meeting in the residence of Joe Vitt, Pohnpei Transfer and Storage manager, 15 residents, including Federated States of Micronesia Vice President Jonah Nanpei, discussed the recent assault by gang-like persons and stripped policemen on what was notorious as formerly a peaceful, safe neighborhood.

It was determined in the meeting that at least nine break-ins had been committed in eight weeks and many at-

Continued on page 5

1920s or 1990s?

This picture of traditional sprit canoes was taken last month during RRE's 44th Anniversary canoe race, but the sailing vessels look much the same as they did in the past—a credit to knowledge and skill passed on to new generations.

Photo by Mary Ann Cordova

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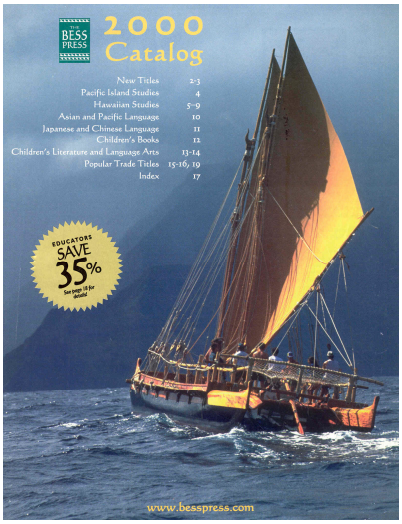
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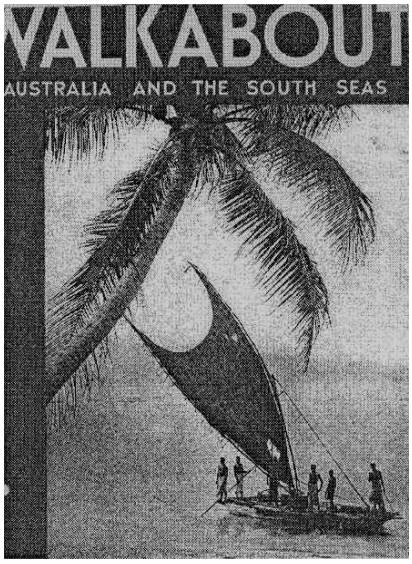
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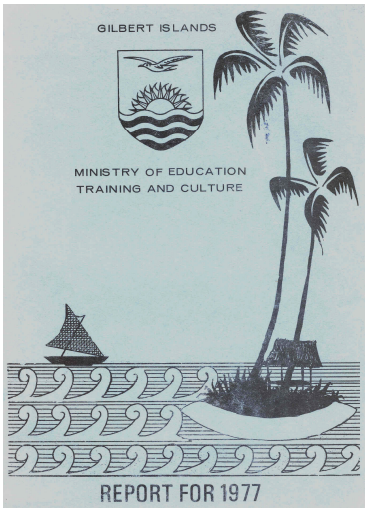
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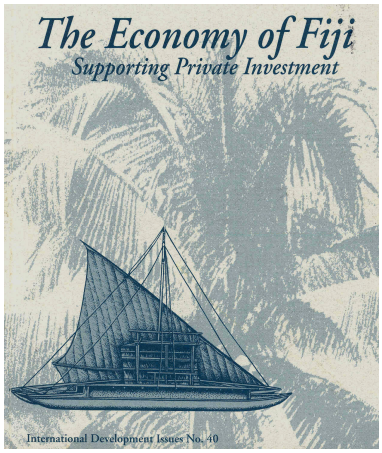
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[1] For canoe rig terminology see Horridge (1986); for canoes in Oceania see Haddon and Hornell (1936-38), Gladwin (1970), Jourdain (1970), Lewis (1972 and 1978), Neyret (1977), Bellwood (1979), Irwin (1992), Feinberg (1995) and Rayawa (2001).

[2] Ivan Gaskell (1992) and Burke (2001) argue the commercial impact of visual material significantly affects popular perceptions of the past.

[3] Canoe iconography on stamps is a fascinating and rewarding field for further research. In addition to the series in 1976, sailing canoes have featured on French Polynesia stamps, for example, in 1942, 1956, 1966, 1976, 1991 and 1992. (Beslu 1981)

[4] Elizabeth Buck (1993, 179-80) acknowledges Baudrillard's "political economy of the sign" but overlooks the authority of visual material, images of the *Hokule'a* and associated navigation, watercraft and voyaging revivals.

[5] Iconography is used here in the sense of a gallery or sequence of images, arranged chronologically. This usage is borrowed from Johannes Fabian (1996, 317) and a presentation on the imaging of tulips by Louisa Flander at the "Image and text; a changing relationship" conference, RMIT University, Melbourne, 2000.

[6] For example, the Tasman drawing appears in an exhibition catalogue (Golson and Mummery 1988, 24), serial encyclopedia (Gilbert 1971, 77), general histories (Cameron, 1987, 105; Badger 1988, 15; Snow and Waine 1979, 38) and in scholarly works (Lewis 1972, 258-9)

[7] After several German printings, *Südsee* was published in English in New York in 1935 and London in 1939.

[8] *Papuan Courier,* 26 October 1928. Meyer (1995, 133) notes the last *hiri* voyage allegedly occurred in 1953 but Groves (1972, 103) recorded voyages in 1954-58. Ceremonial rather than voyaging *lakatoi* are still built for Port Moresby's annual Hiri Moala Festival.

[9] The decline in canoe construction was accelerated after 1945 by the availability of the outboard motor, fibre glass "banana boats" and alternative modes of transport such as small aircraft and road links.

[10] Postcard 135694, published by JW Waters, Suva (n.d.) in the Max Shekleton Collection, Noumea, New Caledonia. Other postcards of this period suggested canoes were in wide use, at least on Rotuma; for a large fleet of six-metre canoes drawn up a beach, see Card No 01527-1 "Preparing for the canoe race; Rotuma" by Crown Studios, Sydney, Max Shekleton Collection, Noumea, New Caledonia.

[11] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the possibility of a continuing canoe/sail iconography in the extensive mid-war Japanese literature on Micronesia. This is one of several areas of research that remain in the fields of photography, iconography and regional symbolism.

[12] The conference theme was "Voyaging with a vision". This conference is held annually, organized by Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), based in Honolulu.

[13] The claim by Lewis (1977, 202) is repeated consistently. For example, in the Hawaiian Airlines in-flight magazine, *Hana Hou*, (2000, 3 (1), 45) the impact was rephrased by a staff writer as "a catalyst for a generation of cultural renewal".

[14] A model of the *kalia* being built was the feature photograph in a story by the Melbourne *Sun-Herald.* The biggest *Kalia* in Tongan story telling is the *Lomipeau,* reputed to be 85 metres in length and used to transport large stones for tomb building from 'Uvea to Tongatapu. I am grateful to Kim Fale, Nuku'alofa, Tonga for details on the millennium canoe projects.

[15] For a bibliography see Goetzfridt (1992). In the large-format, illustrated book market, acknowledgement of Pacific voyaging is now normal practice. See Nile (1996, 63-66) and Burenhult (1994a, *Vol 4,* 154-58 and 1994b*,* Vol 5, 106-7.) A South Pacific Commission (now Secretariat for the Pacific Community) poster celebrating fifty years of collecting photographs from the region 1947-97, included four canoe images as markers of a significant aspect of Island life.

[16] These canoe races, sailing and paddling events are now listed in the annual calendar of regional events published by the Tourism Council of the South Pacific.

[17] T-shirts with a line drawing of the *Vaka Ki Mururoa* and the caption "Cook Islands; South Pacific" were available at retailers on Rarotonga in 1996.

[18] For example, see Smith (1988, 22-3), Markowitz (1996, 11), Murphy (1997, 10-17) and Markowitz (2000, 48-9). Language is often added to voyaging as an alleged unifying revival mechanism; see Andrew (1995, 46-7).

[19] Nicholas Thomas asks these questions of contemporary Maori viewing the *Te Maori* and *Taonga Maori* exhibitions in New Zealand. (Thomas, 1996, 297)